

POST OFFICE ARCHIVES

By Dave Hill

I recently visited the PO Archives, behind Mount Pleasant Sorting Office, London WC1. It is an excellent reference library for perfin research. Not only does it have the Archives (more about these later) but it also has a selection of Kelly's London Directories, The Dictionary of National Biography, Who's Who and Debrett on the shelves.

Nearly all the records are the actual thing and not copies or microfilm. It is so difficult to flick through a microfilm: the actual book is a lot easier.

The archive materials have to be requisitioned but unless the assistants are very busy this only takes a few minutes. There is a seating area where you can take your own refreshments and the whole (air-conditioned) atmosphere is quite relaxed.

Ask for the index of Post 30 (vol 2 and later have perfins and related subjects) and look under stamps/postage for stamp subjects. Be careful, there is much in the archives to divert your attention from perfins. Please let me know if you find anything I have not written about, giving the file number. In particular I don't think we have seen the original documents that John Nelson used in writing his Handbook, since the Archives moved.

The file that I summarised in Bulletin 262 is called Post 30 file 1313. There may be two files, a and b. I looked at b this time and saw a few things which I do not remember seeing on the previous occasion.

You need proof of your identity to get in, the only drawback being that the archives only open Monday to Friday.

The Guildhall Library has a complete set of Kelly's London Directories (but mostly on microfilm) and is open on a Saturday too. Both have pay photocopiers but Guildhall, and possibly PO Archives, do not permit copying of Kelly's because of copyright.

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